

better. They never did—they never got the job done. So we came along. We modernized Medicare for our seniors. We said, “If you make a pledge to the seniors of the United States, make it a good pledge; make it work.” You see, the Government would pay \$25,000 for an ulcer surgery but not a dime for the prescription drugs to prevent the surgery from being needed in the first place. What I’m telling you is, medicine had become modern, but Medicare hadn’t.

And so we changed it. And today, more than 32 million seniors have enrolled in Part D of Medicare, which means there’s a prescription drug benefit. The average senior saves one-half on his or her drug bills. And if you’re a poor senior—about a third of those eligible for Medicare—the Federal Government is going to pay 95 percent of your drug bills. The days of a senior having to choose between food and medicine are gone, thanks to the Republican Party.

But we also understand that we don’t want the Federal Government running your health care. The best health care system is one where the patient-doctor relationship is central to the decisionmaking, and that’s why we’re for transparency, information technology in the health care field. That’s why we’re strong believers in health savings accounts, which will help the uninsured and the small-business owners. We’re believers in association health plans that will allow small businesses to pool risk across jurisdictional boundaries so they can buy insurance at the same discounts that big businesses get to do.

I’ll tell you what else we’re for: We understand that frivolous and junk lawsuits run good doctors out of practice and run up the cost of your medicine. And you got a problem here in Pennsylvania. You got ob-gyns leaving your State. You got specialists who are fearful of practicing medicine. And you need people like these two Congressmen who are willing to stand up to the trial lawyers and promote good, strong medical liability reform.

Finally, although they’re not in the Senate, I appreciate them supporting me in picking judges, the right kind of judges—judges who will not legislate from the bench but judges who will strictly interpret the Constitution. I am proud to have nominated Chief Justice

John Roberts and Justice Sam Alito, and I’m even prouder they got confirmed by the United States Senate.

Ours is a philosophy that trusts people. We’d rather you have your money. We believe you can spend it wisely. We believe you can make the right decisions when it comes to medicine. We believe our seniors should be given modern medicine, and we delivered on our promises. The other bunch, they get angry, and they yell and they, you know, scream and holler. We just go about and get the job done. We’re people who can deliver results on behalf of the American people.

I’ve signed a Medicare reform bill; I’ve signed an energy bill; I’ve signed tax cuts; I’ve signed bills to make sure those who wear the uniform get the full support of the United States Government. And I’m proud to have these two accomplished men serving in Washington, DC. The people of Pennsylvania have got two good Congressmen in these two, and you need to send them back. They’re serving this State with dignity, and they’re serving our country with honor, and I’m proud to call them friends.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:46 p.m. at the Sheraton Philadelphia City Center. In his remarks, he referred to Karen Gerlach, wife of Representative Jim Gerlach; Kathleen Fitzpatrick, wife of Representative Michael G. Fitzpatrick; Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan; and Chairman Kim Chong-il of North Korea.

Proclamation 8024—National Homeownership Month, 2006

May 24, 2006

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Owning a home is an important part of the American dream. During National Homeownership Month, we raise awareness of homeownership and encourage more Americans to consider the benefits of owning their own home.

Nearly 70 percent of Americans enjoy the satisfaction of owning their own home, and my Administration continues to promote an ownership society where the promise of

America reaches all our citizens. The American Dream Downpayment Act of 2003 is helping thousands of low to moderate income and minority families with downpayment and closing costs, which represent the greatest barrier to homeownership. Since 2002, when I announced our goal to help 5.5 million minorities become homeowners by the end of this decade, the rate of minority homeownership has climbed above 50 percent, and more than 2.5 million minority families have become new homeowners. My Administration will continue to provide counseling and assistance for new homebuyers and expand homeownership opportunities for all Americans.

During National Homeownership Month and throughout the year, we applaud the men and women who work to achieve the dream of homeownership, and we are grateful for those who provide counseling, lending, real estate, construction, and other services to these individuals. The hard work, financial discipline, and personal responsibility of our country's homeowners help transform neighborhoods throughout our Nation and reflect the best qualities of America.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim June 2006 as National Homeownership Month. I call upon the people of the United States to join me in building a more hopeful society and recognizing the importance of expanding the ownership of homes across our great Nation.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-fourth day of May, in the year of our Lord two thousand six, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirtieth.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., May 26, 2006]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on May 30.

Remarks at the Change of Command Ceremony for the Commandant of the United States Coast Guard

May 25, 2006

Thank you all. Thank you for the warm welcome. I'm delighted to be here with you at Fort McNair. I'm pleased to join you in celebrating an historic moment for the United States Coast Guard. This morning we mark a change of command at the helm of America's oldest continuous maritime service.

Our Nation thanks a fine patriot, Admiral Tom Collins, for his leadership these past 4 years. And we thank his wife, Nancy, and their family for joining us today. We also congratulate Admiral Thad Allen, as he begins his duties as the 23d Commandant of the United States Coast Guard. And we appreciate the love and support of his wife, Pam, and their fine family as well.

I want to thank Michael Chertoff for his distinguished service to our country. I appreciate the other members of my Cabinet who have joined to celebrate Thad Allen beginning his duties as the Commandant: Secretary Elaine Chao and Secretary Norm Mineta and Secretary Sam Bodman and Acting Secretary Lynn Scarlett.

I'm honored to be on stage with General Pete Pace, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, and I welcome his wife, Lynne, as well. I want to thank the Members of Congress who have joined us today. I appreciate Master Chief Frank Welch, who is the Master Chief Petty Officer of the United States Coast Guard. I want to thank Captain Wilbur Douglass for his fine invocation. I appreciate the members of the diplomatic corps who are here. Thank you all for coming.

The history of the Coast Guard dates back more than two centuries to the Revenue Cutter Service, established by Alexander Hamilton during the presidency of George Washington. Or as I call him, the first George W. [Laughter]

Through the generations, the men and women of the Coast Guard have stepped forward to defend our Nation, to protect our waterways and ports, to enforce maritime law, to safeguard commerce and natural resources, and to rescue those in peril on the